(d) the action plan of the Centre to resolve the issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA):(a) The Government has undertaken a comprehensive review of existing environmental clearance process, formulated a revised procedure, and initiated consultations with all the concerned stakeholders on the proposed revised procedure.

(b) and (c) During the meetings with the State Governments, some of the States have suggested certain changes in the proposed revised procedure. The important changes suggested include:

- More decentralization of powers for granting environmental clearance to the State Governments.
- Public hearing should not be conducted by the project proponent.
- Clear lists of projects -requiring environmental clearance at Central and State levels.

(d) Any change in the existing environmental clearance process will be brought forth only after following the due statutory procedure laid down under the relevant Acts/Rules.

Withholding the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

225. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have withheld the release of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to revive the Action Plan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA):(a) and (b) Preparation of NBSAP (National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan) has been taken up as a part of India's commitment under the Convention on Biological

Diversity. As a first step, the preparation of a Technical Report to serve as an input to the NBSAP was assigned to two non-Governmental organizations, 'Kalpavriksh' and 'Biotech Consortium India Limited', under a United Nations Development Programme-Global Environment Facility sponsored Enabling Activity grant to Government of India. Pursuant to the completion of project tenure, the Ministry of environment and Forests has since received the draft Project Report as consolidated and prepared by the Kalpavriksh. The draft report is a consultant's report which needs to be reviewed at the Government level for financial, administrative and legal implications and for scientific accuracy. Accordingly, a group of experts was constituted by the Ministry to scrutinize the draft report prepared by the Kalpavirksh and rectify discrepancies and inconsistencies. From the corrected report, a draft National Action Plan is to be prepared. As per the laid down procedures and guidelines the draft plans are than processed and finalized with due approval at the competent level. As would therefore be noted, the Government has not withheld the release of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

**Tree-bank**

†226. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there exists a tree-bank in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the significance of a tree-bank in reference to botanical survey?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA):(a) There is no information available with the Ministry regarding the existence of tree-bank in the country.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Tree-bank is not much significant in respect of botanical survey but it is an important tool in the form of off-site planting and/or contribution to a Tree Bank Fund.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.